

REMARKS

Claims 11-16 are pending. No claims are amended, withdrawn, cancelled, or added as a result of this response. Applicants respectfully request entry of this response under 37 CFR 1.116 in that it places the application in better form for consideration on appeal.

Claims 11-16 were rejected under 35 USC Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Phillips (US 5060998) in view of McQuade et al (US 5507544). Applicants respectfully traverse.

The device of Phillips is a shopping aid for carrying shopping bags (column 1, lines 6-8). The handles of shopping bags are hooked into the receiving means 20 (column 3, lines 5-8; Fig. 5). There is no indication in Phillips that the shopping aid device *is pushed through the handles of storage containers and a closure plugged on*, as claimed in Claims 11-16. Indeed, there would be no reason to do so in Phillips because when the handle of a shopping bag is placed in the slot 24 of the receiving means 20, the handle is secured by notch 28 (column 3, lines 35-36). There is also no closure in Phillips because the device in Phillips is designed with notches to easily place and remove shopping bags. Therefore, the Phillips device is neither pushed through the handles of storage containers nor has a closure that is plugged on.

McQuade does not solve any of the deficiencies of Phillips. McQuade also has no closures. Once again, there is no reason why McQuade should have closures because the device in McQuade is used to carry one gallon plastic jugs and an important feature of McQuade is that the device be easily released and reused (column 1, lines 28-35). Therefore, even if, *arguendo*, McQuade had a closure, it would not *be fixedly connected to the connector*, as claimed in the pending claims. In other words, McQuade teaches away from Claims 11-16.

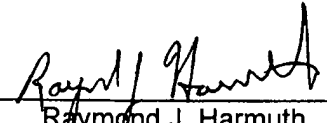
In conclusion, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 11-16 are not unpatentable over the combination of Phillips and McQuade because neither Phillips, nor McQuade, nor the combination of Phillips and McQuade, discloses all elements claimed in Claims 11-16.

With the foregoing remarks it is believed the claims have been placed in condition for allowance. Review and consideration of the claims and allowance of the same are respectfully requested,

Respectfully submitted,

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